

The Times-Dispatch

DAILY—WEEKLY—SUNDAY.

Business Office.....516 E. Main Street.
Washington Bureau.....326-7 Munsey Building.
Manchester Bureau.....1102 Hull Street.
Petersburg Bureau.....40 N. Sycamore St.
Lynchburg Bureau.....215 Eighth St.

BY MAIL. One. Six. Three One.
POSTAGE PAID. Year. Mos. Mos. Mos.
Daily with Sunday.....\$6.00 \$2.00 \$1.50 .50
Daily without Sunday 4.00 2.00 1.00 .25
Sunday edition only.....2.00 1.00 .50 .25
Weekly (Wednesday).....1.00 .50 .25 .10

By Times-Dispatch Carrier Delivery Service in Richmond (and suburbs), Manchester and Petersburg—One Week. One Year.
Daily with Sunday.....14 cents \$6.50
Daily without Sunday.....10 cents 4.50
Sunday only.....5 cents 2.50

(Yearly subscriptions payable in advance.)
Entered January 27, 1907, at Richmond, Va., as second-class matter, under act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1908.

No man can ever escape his destiny, and often he fulfills it more certainly by the very endeavor to escape it.—Farrar.

THE LEGISLATURE AND JUDGE RHEA.

Judge Wickham's minority report like a searchlight cuts through the fog of argument that have enveloped the issue in Judge Rhea's confirmation.

To the citizen onlooker, who is unskilled in the mysteries of politics, the question would have been simply, "Is Judge Rhea a fit man for the singularly high and important duties of Corporation Commissioner?" It was just because Judge Wickham approached this question as the plain, ordinary, everyday citizen would have done that his report has been of such signal merit.

Elsewhere will be found in full the argument made by the majority for Judge Rhea's confirmation and the analysis by Judge Wickham of the reasons against that action.

The majority report exonerates Judge Rhea on every count, and the minority report does not find the evidence sufficiently strong to convict him criminally of breaking the election laws.

The majority report attributes the charges against Judge Rhea to partisan malice and revengeful hatred, and calls for his confirmation as due the Governor, the Democratic party and Judge Rhea himself.

The minority report is more judicial. It reasons thus: Election frauds followed Judge Rhea's activities in several instances, to-wit: in taking the census of Bristol in 1890, in the Scott county ballot matter in 1890, in the frauds in Russell, Scott and Buchanan counties in 1902. Judge Rhea was surrounded by warm friends and ardent supporters, who are shown to have violated the State laws in his interest.

To this Judge Rhea's only defense is, not that there were no violations, and that he was not to profit by them, but that he did not direct them to be done, and did not know of them before they were done. "And this defense," adds the minority report, "is supported solely by the denial of guilty knowledge and the assertion of his innocence."

As a matter of law and common sense, Judge Wickham finds that the facts so developed raise a presumption against Judge Rhea's fitness which has not, in Judge Wickham's opinion, been dispelled. In this conclusion the minority report expresses with perfect clearness the opinion of many other citizens that the damaging charges against Judge Rhea have been urged with too much justification to make him a proper person for the office of Corporation Commissioner.

Governor Swanson's appointment of Judge Rhea was a serious political blunder. That, at least, cannot be undone, but the prestige of the Corporation Commission can be kept unimpaired, and the capacity of the Democratic party to govern can be maintained and emphasized, if the Legislature shall be guided by the wishes of the citizens generally, and shall, for the good of the State and the Democratic party, refuse to confirm Judge Rhea.

HOPE FOR OYSTER LEGISLATION.

Though the Watkins-Green oyster bill was reported with the recommendation that it do not pass, and though the Byrd-Wickham oyster bill is still in the committee, there is hope that the new bill introduced by Senators Wickham, Holt and Holland as a substitute for the original Byrd-Wickham bill will be enacted into law. Both of these measures aimed at the same fundamental purpose—namely, to get accurate and scientific information upon which to base future oyster legislation.

The Times-Dispatch supported the Watkins-Green bill, believing that, if possible, the control and lease of the oyster-bearing bottoms should be in the hands of the State Board of Fisheries. When it became apparent that the opposition to this course was invincible, this paper urged the passage of the Byrd-Wickham bill, which primarily was meant to get a new survey without committing the State to any definite policy as to the disposition to be made of the barren bottoms, if any there were. This bill also failed to gain the support of the Tidewater delegates, for reasons not yet assigned.

Now comes Senate bill 491, which authorizes the State Board of Fisheries to straighten the lines of the Bay survey, thereby releasing about 3,000 acres, which land can be leased under the direction of the State Board of Fisheries. In addition the State Board of Fisheries is required to report at the next session of the Legislature on the relative productivity of the lands left within the survey.

So the effect of Senate bill 491 will be to accomplish practically all that was aimed at by the Byrd-Wickham bill, besides releasing at once 3,000 acres for cultivation of seed oysters. This is a beginning that has in it the prospect of ultimately putting the oyster industry on a permanent basis.

And while the bill goes only a very little way it is the best and only practical measure before the Legislature, and as such it ought to become law with as little delay as possible.

A MESSAGE TO THE SENATE.

In 1901 the Virginia Conference of Charities and Corrections, a purely philanthropic organization, reached the conclusion that Virginia stood in need of a State board whose duty it should be to exercise advisory supervision over the prisons and almshouses of the Commonwealth, and The Times-Dispatch and other newspapers have urged the General Assembly to adopt the recommendation. Why? Because there is abundant reason to believe that many of the jails are filthy, unsanitary, almost uninhabitable, and that abuses exist within their walls that are disgraceful to civilization. It is also believed that some of the almshouses—"poorhouses" they are aptly called—are almost as bad as the jails, and that the unfortunate inmates are subjected to needier hardships.

It is probably true that these conditions are due to careless neglect, rather than to any evil intent on the part of the keepers, and it is believed that a State Board of Charities, with local boards in the several counties, such as House bill No. 99 provides for, would by inspection and suggestion greatly improve the situation. These boards would have no administrative powers, but only the right of inspection and the privilege to advise and recommend, and report to the authorities of government when necessary. The members would receive no pay whatsoever for their services; their labors would be purely in the interest of humanity and good government. Such a board would carry with it a dignity and influence which could not possibly attach to a paid commissioner, and the prime object of the measure is reformatory, not inquisitorial and punitive. There is a fundamental difference between a committee of investigation and a hired detective. All honest jailers and almshouse keepers would welcome a visit from a committee whose object was to aid them in improving their work, while they would resent the prying of a paid examiner.

The Montague bill, which has passed the House, is in line with the system that has been tried and proven in other States, and it should by all means be passed by the Senate. The commissioner or plan is purely experimental and would probably prove to be a failure. This is a subject that the Legislature cannot afford to experiment with. Give us the measure that has proven itself to be efficient.

WRONG, AS USUAL.

On the front page of an afternoon paper appeared yesterday in large type these head lines, "Thoroughbreds Rule the Sales," over an account of a local sale of trotting horses.

Such a mistake is surprising, even in an afternoon paper, for the most ignorant are aware that trotting horses belong to the class standard bred, and are as far removed from the thoroughbred as are perchers or hackneys.

Virginia is recognized as the home of the thoroughbred, for here it was the first pure-bred was brought from England, about 1609. For a Virginia newspaper, therefore, to make such a slip makes the dry bones of Sir Archie and Buller Roake rattle with anguish.

Mr. Knowland, of California, suggested the motto, "I know that my remedy lives," for clearing-house certificates. It was telegraphed out from Washington as something excitingly funny, when, as a matter of fact, it was a suggestion made in extremely bad taste, even if intended, as it doubtless was, as a mere pleasantry.—Washington Herald.

Nor did it have the merit of originality, for Bob Ingersoll employed the quotation in connection with silver dollars, at least twelve years ago.

"How is New York City to get a sufficient water supply fifty or one hundred years hence?" asks the New York Evening Post. In the meantime the unemployed army parades the streets and asks, "How are the hungry to get bread to-morrow?"

Our own opinion is that Otto Kelsey, New York's Superintendent of Insurance, can outstick any man of his size and weight in the world, Thomas C. Platt alone barred.

Taft's candidacy is acquiring popularity largely because the press poets can make rhymes on his name. Everything has been against Fairbanks from the start.

We anticipate that at the polls this new party of Mr. Hearst's will invariably prove the party of the second part, or worse.

Walter Wellman predicts Taft's nomination on the first ballot. Let's see—is it the pole or the poll that Walter has made his specialty?

Eleven million dollars' worth of chewing-gum was consumed in this country last year, the vast majority of it, we believe, by our stenographer.

Miss Cornelia Harriman is going to marry a plain American citizen. This is a terrible blow for Hungary.

The question is largely academic, anyway, because women never parade. They column.

E. R. Thomas warmly declares that he cannot live on less than \$50,000 a year, which, he needs.

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And yanking out a package, she began to chew her gum.

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And then she showed herself to bed and dreamed—oh, it was rum! She brought a mouth like Mississippi's to three Pike's Peaks of gum!

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"Pa, had reason to think lately," replied the man who had been trying to get his act extended, "that a good many of them are made of cement!"—Chicago Record-Herald.

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Editor of The Times-Dispatch: Sir,—Why don't the prohibition people see to it to demand of Congress one single, simple act to solve the whole liquor problem on purely democratic principles? Why not demand such an act as would settle the question and which would receive little or no opposition from any law-abiding citizen? Just amend the license law so the government will issue license always subject to State and local law. If lawbreakers couldn't get government license, they wouldn't be able to prohibit without prohibiting for a fact. But as long as Uncle Sam, for a paltry dollar, will become a partner in crime, local authorities will wink at it. Make this one amendment to the license law, and it will settle the whole question democratically.

DR. J. W. GREENE.

February 24, 1908.

Weak Little Boys

may become fine strong men. Some of the strong men of today were sickly boys years ago. Many of them received

Scott's Emulsion

at their mother's knee. This had a power in it that changed them from weak, delicate boys into strong, robust boys.

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